

Contributions

BIBLE PORTRAITS. Adam. No. 1

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"Godlike erect, with native honour clad,
His fair large front and eye sublime declared
Absolute rule; and hyacinthine locks
Round from his parted forelock manly hung
Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders broad;—
The goodliest man of men since born his sons."

This is the Miltonic picture of Adam, and is perhaps the noblest conception of the physical appearance of our great progenitor which can be found in literature. How different it is from the grotesque Talmudic picture, which represents Adam as a gigantic figure whose head reached to heaven, and whose face was as bright as the sun. Both these extraordinary features, his height and the effulgence of his face, were doubtless progressive exaggerations of his traditional likeness. With regard to the first it appears to be a natural and popular fancy to think of Adam as possessing extraordinary stature. In ancient and mediaeval times extraordinary stature and strength were essential to the popular conception of personal greatness. The hero must be physically massive, fit to lead men, able to overthrow powerful enemies. It was impossible for men in those days to think of the first man other than an unparalleled giant, towering, irresistible, and from this conception of him successive ages would make slow subtraction. While the modern conception of greatness is not so materialistic, still it is impossible to think of Adam as a little man. Our literary inheritance on the subject from the past ages, the opinion of some Anthropologists, the testimony of some remarkable anthropologic discoveries, and particularly the general impression that a certain degree of massiveness and strength is essential to the highest ideal of physical perfection, all tend to influence our conception of the first man as a king of men, physically as well as intellectually.

The Hebrew idea of his shining face is doubtless derived from the etymology of the word Adam, which while it is somewhat uncertain is probably connected with a root signifying red, giving the idea that he was red, or ruddy, possessing an almost effulgent glow of virility, vigor, and health. Long tradition, and the necessity of lending an extraordinary effect to this feature of his personal appearance would naturally exaggerate this natural glow to the degree of celestial brightness, like the shining of the sun.

We have more interest in the moral and intellectual, than in the physical Adam. Some writers have called the adamic age the child age of the human race. Adam was no more a child in intellect than in stature. Concerning the last the Bible has little or nothing to say. It gives no hint whether he was a Goli-

ath or a Zaccheus. But concerning his intellectual equipment it does give us a very significant hint. When the Lord brought to him all the animals "to see what he would call them," he exhibited a most wonderful intellectual insight into the distinguishing characteristics of each one, and invented names which embodied and expressed these conceptions. Here was the strong and accurate movement of an adult mind. There is yet another test of his intellectual maturity. In the transgression he was not deceived. He clearly saw the nature and results of that melancholy transaction, even when he reached forth his hand and ate. Why he did it, foreseeing all the consequences, is another question. For our present purpose Paul's authority that he was not deceived is sufficient. That his reason comprehended the nature of the act is ample proof of an intellectual equipment inferior to none of his sons. There is some speculative testimony also which is at least interesting. A stream cannot rise higher than its fountain head. We have separate instances of superlative musical genius, phenomenal mathematical genius, extraordinary poetical genius, qualities with which training and education had nothing to do, which were born in the individual, in some instances shining in him with a solitary glory to the almost total exclusion of other talents. It is not illogical or unnatural to consider all these separate streams as united in the progenital Head, giving us such a man as one would expect to come fresh from the creative hand of Almighty power, wisdom and love.

The argument of the moral greatness of the first man proceeds upon parallel if not identical lines. Before the transgression there was a child-like simplicity, purity, and unconsciousness of evil. Then awakened the consciousness of good and evil, and with it came the *tendency* toward evil, the impulse of self-will and apostacy from God. The Adam of the transgression is an epitome of human history. It has been said that the transaction of the forbidden fruit is childish, that it lacks significance and dignity as an explanation of the advent of evil into the world, and all the tragical effects of it which have followed. But this is not true. Could anything more exactly typify the moral history of mankind? Since when have men ceased to barter paradise for a selfish gratification? Since when have they not sold their birthright for a mess of pottage? Since when have they ceased to turn from the throne to the wallow? Adam foresaw the effects of his sin, and yet plunged into it. In all ages men have gone to ruin with their eyes wide open; and every day enlightened men and women fling themselves down the beetling crags of moral precipices. The story of Eden is repeated

o'er and o'er. It is an old story, an old tragedy, yet it is new and ever recurring in sad human experience.

In the theological Adam we have a superlative interest. Upon this point the Calvinistic dogma of his federal headship is perhaps the most widely accepted. We fell in him. We died in him. His sin, the root of sins, descends to us. His condemnation is upon us. The taint of his guilt is in our blood. The tendency, the impulse of self-will, of apostacy from God, of rebellion against the divine will, is a part of our sad inheritance, as well as all the material circumstances of sorrow, weariness, sickness and death. How all this was reversed by the second Adam we will tell when we have traveled far down the gallery.

CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIOLOGY

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Truth is ever the same, but man's perception of it widens and deepens. Christianity and Christian sociology are not two things. Sociology is but a part of Christianity. It is Christianity applied to society, for the solution of its problems and the answering of its questions. Prof. R. T. Ely says, "Sociology deals with all the phenomena of society: that is to say, with all that concerns men living together and having certain necessary, agreeable and desirable relations with one another." Wilbur F. Crafts says, "The hour has come for Christian sociology which is the study of society from a Christian standpoint with a view to its Christianization."

Hitherto stress has been laid on the application of Christianity to individual lives, to the exclusion of the application to society. It has been overlooked that Christian progress in the individual cannot be most favorable in a non-Christian environment. That Christ came to save the individual has been emphasized to the neglect of the equally important truth that he came to save society, and the complete fruition of the former cannot be found unless it go hand in hand with the latter. No Christian has any complete knowledge of personal salvation who does not apply that religion to the relations which as a social being he necessarily sustains to his fellow men.

Emphasis is being placed, and we note it as a sign of hope for a better civilization and a better discipleship, on the practical side of religion.

Since the reformation the discussion of Christianity has been largely theological, and so far has that needed and helpful tendency proceeded that theology has been emphasized at the expense of its practical application. Men are just beginning to realize that Christ's religion is social as well as individual. And